

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SP-02 PM-03 L-01 INR-05 CIAE-00

NSC-05 SCCT-01 SAM-01 /041 W
----- 035897

R 271800Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6528

TO INFO RUEKJCS/DIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MADRID 5756

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MILI, SP

SUBJECT: MILITARY INFLUENCE IN POLITICAL AFFAIRS

REF: MADRID 5443

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. GOVERNMENT HANDLING OF PENAL CODE REVISION IN CORTES SESSION JULY 14 PROVIDES INDICATION OF BEHIND-THE-SCENES INFLUENCE OF SENIOR MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT IN CERTAIN POLITICAL MATTERS, IN THIS CASE NUANCES RELATING TO KEEPING THE PCE ILLEGAL.KBIN#ADDITION TO COMMUNIST ISSUE, SEPARATISM AND PUBLIC ORDER ARE THE PRINCIPAL POLITICAL CONCERNS OF THE MILITARY. ACTIVE POLITICKING BY THE MILITARY CONTINUES TO BE CONFINED LARGELY TO THESE CONCERNS. THERE IS, OF COURSE, STRONG ATTACHMENT TO THE EXISTING CONSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE ON THE PART OF THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP. AT THE SAME TIME, THE MILITARY IS LOYAL TO THE KING AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AND SYMBOL OF NATIONAL UNITY AND CONTINUES TO ACQUIESCE IN THE POLITICAL REFORM PROCESS. WE DO NOT SEE EVIDENCE AT THIS TIME OF THEIR CHANGING FUNDAMENTALLY IN THIS REGARD, EVEN THOUGH UNDER CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES THEY MAY BRING THEIR INFLUENCE MORE TO BEAR ON SOME POLITICAL ISSUES THAN IN THE PAST. END SUMMARY.

2. POLITICIANS AND MEDIA COMMENTATORS HAVE SAID QUITE EXTEN-
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SIVELY PRIVATELY, BUT NOT VERY MUCH IN PUBLIC, THAT THE

SENIOR MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN CONTRIBUTING TO THE TENSION OF THE CORTES SESSION OF JULY 14 (REFTEL) ON THE PENAL CODE. (INDEED, ONE MEASURE OF THE INDIRECT INFLUENCE THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT CAN HAVE IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS IS PRECISELY THE RELUCTANCE IN AN OTHERWISE RELATIVELY FREE PRESS TO INDULGE IN COMMENTS AND SPECULATION ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY.)

3. MILITARY MEMBERS OF THE CORTES VOTED AS A BLOC JULY 14 IN OPPOSING THE MOST LIBERAL OF THREE FORMULATIONS OF THE OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH RELATING TO THE COMMUNIST ISSUE. SOME DEPUTIES AND OBSERVERS AT THE SESSION HAVE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT ABSTAINED ON THE FIRST TWO VOTES BECAUSE THE FOUR MILITARY MINISTERS HAD WARNED THEY WOULD VOTE NO IF THEIR CIVILIAN COLLEAGUES OPTED TO SUPPORT THE LIBERAL "SUGGESTION" OF THE JUSTICE SUBCOMMITTEE. HOW PLAUSIBLE IS THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE MILITARY PLAYED SUCH A BEHIND-THE-SCENES ROLE? THE ANSWER LIES IN AN EXAMINATION OF RECENT EVENTS, KNOWN ATTITUDES OF THE MILITARY, AND ATMOSPHERICS ON THE EVE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY SESSION.

4. FIRST VICE PRESIDENT DE SANTIAGO WAS ONE OF THE PERSONS PUBLICLY KNOWN TO HAVE SEEN THE KING THE DAY BEFORE ARIAS' RESIGNATION-- THE OTHER TWO WERE ADOLFO SUAREZ AND FERNANDEZ MIRANDA. KNOWING THE KING'S DESIRE TO STAY IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT, AND ALSO CONSIDERING THE FACT THAT DE SANTIAGO WAS TO BECOME ACTING PRIME MINISTER WHEN ARIAS LEFT, IT IS REASONABLE TO ASSUME THAT THE KING KEPT DE SANTIAGO INFORMED ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CHANGE OF THE PREMIERSHIP. EVEN AFTER SUAREZ' APPOINTMENT AND PRIOR TO THE NAMING OF A CABINET, DE SANTIAGO REMAINED OMNIPRESENT IN THE PRESIDENCY ALONG WITH ALFONSO OSORIO, AND DE SANTIAGO MUST HAVE PLAYED A ROLE IN THE DECISION TO KEEP THE SAME MILITARY MINISTERS.

5. THUS, DE SANTIAGO WAS IN A POSITION TO BRING TO BEAR THE THINKING OF THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT THROUGHOUT THE CRISIS. A KNOWLEDGEABLE GOVERNMENT SOURCE TOLD EMBOFF THAT DE SANTIAGO TOLD ARIAS SEVERAL WEEKS AGO THAT HE--AND PRESUMABLY HIS MILITARY COLLEAGUES--WOULD VOTE AGAINST THE CONFIDENTIAL

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MORE LIBERAL VERSION (THE PLURALIST APPROACH) OF THE PENAL CODE REVISION EVEN IF THE REST OF THE GOS VOTED FOR IT WE ALSO KNOW KING WAS TROUBLED BY MILITARY ATTITUDE ON THIS ISSUE. THIS GOVERNMENT SOURCE ADDED THAT SUAREZ SAID DURING HIS RETURN TRIP FROM PARIS ON JULY 13 THAT HE WOULD MEET WITH THE FOUR MILITARY MINISTERS TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE. FROM THIS MEETING MAY HAVE BEEN BORN THE IDEA OF HAVING THE GOVERNMENT ABSTAIN IN TWO VOTES ON THE ISSUE. THE OVERALL IMPACT OF THE GOVT

AND CORTES DISCUSSION OF THE PENAL CODE REVISION WAS TO FOCUS ATTENTION WITHIN THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP ON AN ISSUE IN WHICH THERE IS OVERWHELMING AGREEMENT-- THAT IS, THE PENAL CODE'S RELATIONSHIP TO COMMUNIST LEGALIZATION.

6. GENERAL DE SANTIAGO'S RETENTION AS VICE PRESIDENT, ALONG WITH ARMY MINISTER ALVAREZ-ARENAS, AIR MINISTER FRANCO AND NAVY MINISTER PITA DE VEIGA-- THE LATTER THE ONLY HOLDOVER FROM FRANCO'S LAST CABINET--HELPED CONSERVE THE MILITARY'S POSTURE AS APART FROM PARTISAN POLITICS, BUT ALSO MAINTAINED THE ESSENTIALLY CONSERVATIVE CAST OF THE MILITARY BLOC IN THE CABINET. DE SANTIAGO'S PRINCIPAL PUBLIC STATEMENT AS VICE PRESIDENT FOR DEFENSE, ON FEBRUARY 23, 1976, WAS THAT OF A MAN PREOCCUPIED WITH PRESERVING SPAIN'S TRADITIONAL MORAL AND ETHICAL VALUES FROM OUTSIDE CONTAMINATION OR SUBVERSION. ALVAREZ-ARENAS, BACKED BY OTHERS IN THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT, WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN HAVING THE ANNUAL MAY 30 "VICTORY PARADE" CONTINUED TO BE DESIGNATED AS SUCH DESPITE A PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT THAT IT WOULD BECOME AN "ARMED FORCES DAY PARADE." IN EXPLAINING THE ARMY'S POSITION, ALVAREZ-ARENAS SAID THAT MAY 30 WOULD CONTINUE TO SIGNIFY THE "VICTORY OVER COMMUNISM" AND DESCRIBED "TERRORISM, SEPARATISM AND SUBVERSION" AS THE GREATEST THREATS TO SPAIN. IT WILL ALSO BE RECALLED THAT DE SANTIAGO AND ALVAREZ-ARENAS HAD A MUCH PUBLICIZED LUNCHEON WITH "BUNKER LEADERS" GIRON DE VELASCO, THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF VETERANS, AND RETIRED LT GEN INIESTA CANO AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR.

7. THIS SENIOR MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT, WHICH INCLUDES ACTIVE AND INACTIVE OFFICERS, MEMBERS OF THE VETERANS' CONFEDERATION, OFFICERS OF SOME OF THE STATE-RUN INDUSTRIES AND CORPORATIONS, SOME 42 ACTIVE AND INACTIVE MILITARY DEPUTIES IN THE CORTES, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND OFFICERS WITH SECOND JOBS IN PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS, HAS, WE BELIEVE, FIVE PRINCIPAL PREOCCUPATIONS. IN ROUGH ORDER OF PRIORITY, THEY ARE: (1) PRESERVATION OF NATIONAL TERRITORIAL UNITY; (2) LAW AND ORDER; (3) ANTI-COMMUNISM; (4) KEEPING THE MILITARY INSTITUTION AS UNIFIED AS POSSIBLE AND OUT OF POLITICS EXCEPT WHERE ONE OF THE FIRST THREE CONCERNS IS THREATENED; AND (5) SELF-JUSTIFICATION.

THE MILITARY IDENTIFY THE PCE WITH POINTS (1),(2) AND (3). INDEED, THIS IS A LOGICAL CONSEQUENCE OF SPANISH ARMY "STRATEGIC" THINKING, WHEREBY THE COMMUNIST THREAT IS SEEN LESS IN TERMS OF AN EXTERNAL MILITARY THREAT THAN OF SOVIET-INSPIRED COMMUNIST SUBVERSION OF SPAIN FROM WITHIN. EVENTS IN PORTUGAL, ITALY AND FRANCE, AND IN SPAIN ITSELF, HAVE STRENGTHENED THIS PATTERN OF THINKING. OBLIQUE REFERENCES IN PUBLIC BY AREILZA AND FRAGA TO THE POSSIBILITY OF LEGALIZING

THE PCE AT SOME POINT WERE THUS DISTURBING TO CONSERVATIVE
MILITARY LEADERS.

NOTE BY OCT: #AS RECEIVED.

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SP-02 PM-03 L-01 INR-05 CIAE-00

NSC-05 SCCT-01 SAM-01 /041 W
----- 035926

R 271800Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6529
TO INFO RUEKJCS/DIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MADRID 5756

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MILI, SP

SUBJECT: MILITARY INFLUENCE IN POLITICAL AFFAIRS

REF: MADRID 5443

8. MUCH OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT ON
POLITICAL AFFAIRS IS TRANSMITTED IN AN ALMOST INVISIBLE FASHION,
I.E., BY POLITICIANS WHO EXPLAIN POLITICAL EVENTS AND THEIR
OWN POSITIONS BY THE NEED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE PRESUMED
VIEWS OF THE MILITARY. THIS IS A POWERFUL FACTOR AND MILITARY
LEADERS DO NOT HAVE TO SAY MUCH FOR POLITICIANS TO REACT. THE
PRINCIPAL BENEFICIARY OF THIS PHENOMENON IS THE "BUNKER," WHOSE
REPRESENTATIVES STAY CLOSE TO THE MILITARY AND SAY THAT THEY
KNOW WHAT THE MILITARY THINK. INFAC, HOWEVER, HARD KNOWLEDGE
OF SPECIFIC "MILITARY VIEWPOINTS" IS OFTEN UNAVAILABLE, AT
TIMES BECAUSE A UNIFIED OPINION MAY NOT EXIST.

9. THE RECENT EVENTS DESCRIBED ABOVE SUPPORT THE THESIS THAT
THE SENIOR MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT IS INCLINED TO BECOME REALLY
ACTIVE POLITICALLY WHEN IT JUDGES THAT THERE IS A THREAT IN

ONE OF THE MENTIONED SENSITIVE AREAS, IN THIS CASE AN ISSUE RELATING TO COMMUNISM. THE MILITARY'S REPORTED CURRENT CONCERN OVER ASPECTS OF THE PLANS FOR AMNESTY IS IN THE SAME PATTERN. OTHERWISE, THE MILITARY THUS FAR HAS BEEN PREPARED
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TO ACCOMMODATE THE POLITICAL REFORM PROCESS, ALTHOUGH WE HAVE HEARD EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN FROM INDIVIDUAL SENIOR MILITARY LEADERS REGARDING WHERE THE REFORM PROCESS MIGHT LEAD. WITH THE DROPPING OF THE WORDS "IN DEFENSE MATTERS" FROM HIS TITLE OF FIRST VICE PRESIDENT, DE SANTIAGO'S ROLE AS SECOND MAN IN THE CABINET IS GIVEN MORE EXPLICIT RECOGNITION. HE THUS IS IN A BETTER POSITION THAN BEFORE TO WEIGH IN ON BROADER, NON-MILITARY ISSUES, AND MAY FIND HIMSELF STRONGLY TEMPTED TO DO SO AS EVENTS UNFOLD. HOWEVER, IT MAY BE INSTRUCTIVE THAT THE MILITARY IS SAID NOT TO HAVE WANTED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL DRAFTING GROUPS WHICH MET THROUGHOUT THE DAY ON JULY 16 ON THE GOVERNMENT'S BROAD PROGRAM DECLARATION AND IS ALSO SAID TO BE GENERALLY QUIET IN CABINET DISCUSSIONS OF POLITICAL MATTERS.

10. MILITARY PASSIVE ACQUIESCENCE IN THE POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION PROCESS COULD CHANGE IN THE FUTURE IF THE PUBLIC ORDER, REGIONAL OR COMMUNIST ISSUES WERE TO COME SUFFICIENTLY TO THE FORE. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT YET DETECT PERSUASIVE EVIDENCE THAT THE PRINCIPAL MILITARY LEADERSHIP HAS DEVELOPED AN APPETITE FOR INVOLVING ITSELF IN A MAJOR WAY IN A BROADER RANGE OF POLITICAL ISSUES, SUCH AS THE REFERENDUM, THE COMPOSITION OF THE UPPER CHAMBER OF THE NEW LEGISLATURE, THE RELATIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE TWO CHAMBERS, THE ELECTORAL LAW, AND THE DEGREE OF ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE EXECUTIVE TO THE LEGISLATURE OR THE PEOPLE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL MILITARY RELATIONS, GOVERNMENT REFORM, PENAL REFORM, POLITICAL REPRESSION, LEGISLATIVE BILLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MADRID05756
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760289-0899
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760718/aaaaapro.tel
Line Count: 260
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 76 MADRID 5443
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 APR 2004 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <07 SEP 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MILITARY INFLUENCE IN POLITICAL AFFAIRS
TAGS: PINT, MILI, SP
To: STATE DIA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006